



TEN YEARS SINCE EGYPT'S REVOLUTION

HOSSAM EL-HAMALAWY TELLS THE STORY OF THE REVOLT >>PAGES 10&11

DEFIANCE AS
MOHAMUD
HASSAN DIES
AFTER CONTACT
WITH COPS >>PAGE 6

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DONALD TRUMP HAS GONE...

LET'S MAKE RACISTS AFRAID AGAIN



PROTESTING in
Brooklyn, New York

HISTORY

Alexandra Kollontai—
fighter from the struggle

ALEXANDRA KOLLONTAI was a leading Russian revolutionary, who tirelessly fought for socialism and women's liberation.

In a new book, author Cathy Porter compiles a vital selection of Kollontai's literature.

>>Pages 14&15



NHS

**PPE rules put health
workers in danger**

FAILURE TO provide NHS workers with the highest grade personal protective equipment is putting lives at risk.

That's what a paramedic and an occupational therapist in London have told Socialist Worker.

>>Page 4

PALESTINE

Israeli human rights group
says state is apartheid

ISRAEL RUNS an apartheid regime. That's no longer simply the charge of Palestine solidarity campaigners, but the position of Israel's largest and most respected human rights organisation. It's a striking position for an Israeli organisation to take.

>>Page 17



THE THINGS THEY SAY

'Labour can be the party of business and the party of workers. We shouldn't see a contradiction between the two'

Rachel Reeves, Labour shadow minister for the Cabinet Office

'I'm the last person you should take travel advice on this from'

Tory transport secretary Grant Shapps with a refreshing, rare level of self-awareness

'I installed an app last week that deletes all tweets more than a week old'

Toby Young explains why allegations that he had been deleting his old tweets to hide his errors were false

'We are not going to lower the standards of workers' rights. We want to protect and enhance workers' rights going forward, not row back on them'

Tory business secretary Kwasi Kwarteng on reports that the Tories are about to attack workers' rights, again



Tories criminalise Travellers who have no place to go

TRAVELLERS WILL bear the brunt of a new discriminatory law from the Tories.

Intentional trespass is to become a criminal offence. That will enable police to seize vehicles and arrest Travellers who refuse to move on. Breaching the new law face means a three-month prison sentence and fine of up to £2,500.

At present, trespass is a civil offence. The Tories will, allegedly, define "trespass" to avoid criminalising walkers.

Police will also gain powers to prosecute Travellers if they return to a specific site within 12 months, a quadrupling of the current three months.

Police will be able to act sooner as the threshold for intervention will be dropped from six illegally parked caravans to two. The new measures will also allow officers to remove trespassers from camping on or beside a road.

The Friends, Families and Travellers (FFT) charity said that even the police did not believe the new criminal powers were necessary. In a consultation on the new law, some 84 percent of police said



Criminalised by the Tories

they did not support the criminalisation of unauthorised encampments.

Thousands of people stuck on council site waiting lists are chasing fewer than 100 vacant pitches, an investigation by FFT has revealed.

The few vacant pitches are either temporary "transit site" pitches or run down and with no services.

In Surrey, where there are 150 households on waiting lists for pitches, researchers were told that current sites

were all doubled up and there was overcrowding. Mary, a Traveller from the south west of England, has been on her local council's waiting list for a vacant pitch for over three years.

"When I was expecting my daughter, I put myself down for two sites in the south west," said Mary.

"The advice from the liaison officer was 'to park up where you feel safest and where people are least likely to complain'."

Only eight out of 68 councils in south east England had identified enough land in their area for Travellers to live.

Sarah Sweeney from FFT said, "It is deeply unfair that while the government is dramatically failing to identify enough land for Gypsy and Traveller families to live on, the home secretary is working to create laws to imprison, fine and remove the homes of families living on roadside camps for the 'crime' of having nowhere else to go.

"Stop placing blame on the very families they have failed. Everybody needs a place to live."

LORD PETER Mandelson has been embracing the business of Brexit. He and his strategic advisory business Global Counsel won a £25,200 no-competition contract with the department for international trade last year.

The contract is to provide "trade policy and legal training in the field of international economic policy and cross-border financial services policy."



Mandelson—cashing in

THE BIGGEST gathering of criminals will be heading for the British seaside later this year.

The G7 summit will take place in Cornwall's Carbis Bay, known for its sandy beach and clear waters, on 11-13 June.

Boris Johnson called it the "perfect location for such a crucial summit". A pleasant place to have a protest too.

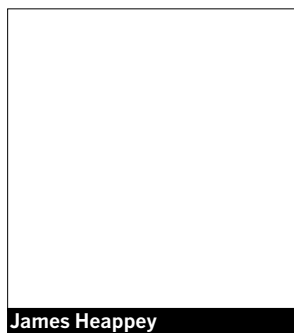
British army trains Saudi Arabia forces

TORY MINISTER for the armed forces, James Heappey, has happily revealed that our brave boys are on hand to make sure the Saudi Arabian armed forces are able to commit war crimes with British levels of skill.

A recent parliamentary answer revealed what the Tories had previously not admitted.

It confirmed, "The UK Armed Forces provides training to security partners internationally and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is one such partner.

"Pursuant to the funding streams mentioned in Deposited Paper DEP2020-0835 committed on 9 December 2020, we



James Heappey

have provided training advice and assistance to the Royal Saudi Air Force, Royal Saudi Land Forces, Royal Saudi Naval Forces, Border Guard, Saudi Arabia National Guard, Joint Incident Assessment, Security Forces and Joint Forces Command."

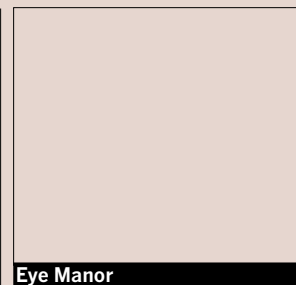
Baying mobs set to descend on manor?

THE government plans new laws to protect statues in England from being removed "on a whim or at the behest of a baying mob" communities secretary Robert Jenrick has said.

He announced the plans in the Sunday Telegraph newspaper.

The plans follow the toppling of a statue of slave trader Edward Colston last year.

Jenrick added that he had noticed an attempt to set a narrative that seeks to erase part of the nation's history, saying this was "at the hand of the flash mob, or by the decree of a 'cultural



Eye Manor

committee' of town hall militants and woke worthies".

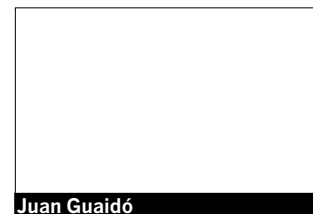
Of the three houses Jenrick happens to own, one is Eye Manor in Hertfordshire, which was originally built for a slave owner and sugar trader.

This is no doubt merely a coincidence.

Government funds right in Venezuela

THE BRITISH government has established a journalism project to "influence Venezuela's media agenda". In addition a Foreign Office-funded foundation is spending £750,000 on a secretive "democracy-promotion" programme in the country.

It's part of the Tories' stepping up of efforts to



Juan Guaidó

remove the government of Nicolas Maduro.

The British government recognises right wing and pro-Western opposition figure Juan Guaidó as president.

It is running a number of anti-government programmes in Venezuela.

They are funded from the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund. This says it supports projects designed "to tackle instability and to prevent conflicts that threaten UK interests".

Those who benefit from the journalism funding are warned "the British government—and its resourcing of the project—should not be expressly referred or linked to the individual outputs of the project (i.e. individual articles, events etc)."

The Declassified UK website also recently revealed that a secretive British propaganda unit, named the Information Research Department, tried to stop Chilean socialist Salvador Allende from winning presidential elections in 1964 and 1970.

Trump goes on a killing spree

THE TURMOIL around Donald Trump's final days didn't stop him carrying through an execution spree.

After 17 years without a single execution sanctioned at the federal level, he has pushed through 13 since July.

The federal government has executed more than three times as many people in the last six months than in the previous six decades.

Trump is the most murderous president since Grover Cleveland in the 1800s.

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‘Intensive care in crisis’ —nurse speaks out

WORKING AS a nurse on hospital intensive care wards has always been tough. But the huge influx of very sick Covid-19 patients is making the job much harder.

“We take over the running of a patient’s body. We control their heart rate, their blood pressure, their breathing. The patient’s life is in our hands and it’s a huge responsibility,” said Joan Pons Laplana. He is a senior nurse who often works in intensive care units in South Yorkshire.

“We have to monitor patients constantly because change can happen so quickly,” he explained.

“Any fluctuation in their blood pressure or breathing could mean adjusting their treatments, or could be a sign that they are deteriorating.”

That’s why hospitals generally allocate one nurse for every intensive care patient.

But the pandemic is driving some London NHS trusts to insist a single nurse can oversee the care of up to four seriously ill people.

Joan has serious worries about this, as patients can deteriorate “so quickly”.

“A nurse can normally see signs of a coming crisis by noting some fluctuations in a patient’s vital signs, and that gives them time to put measures in place,” he said.

“But if you have more than one patient, and you have to attend to them for a few minutes you might miss the clues and that can be crucial.”

Immense

The pressure on intensive care nurses is already immense, said Joan.

“I’ve often woken at night worrying about decisions I’ve made during my shift,” he said. “Sometimes I’ve been so worried, I’ve phoned my ward to check on a patient to see if they’re OK.”

Some hospitals are trying to maintain their nurse to patient numbers



HEALTH WORKERS took their demands for government accountability, better NHS funding and a 15 percent pay rise to Boris Johnson last week

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN



Joan Pons Laplana

by bringing staff from other wards into intensive care. But intensive care nursing is a very specific skill, one that uses equipment and drugs not generally found elsewhere.

“Teaching nurses to work in our units takes a lot of time, not just a few weeks,” said Joan.

“I think we’ll be putting those nurses under unreasonable pressure. You press a wrong button on a piece of equipment you are not familiar with and a patient can die.”

There are no easy solutions to the problem of staffing intensive care units.

Demand is set to carry on rising until at least the end of this month,

but many hospitals are already overwhelmed.

“Boris Johnson made great play of plans to build new hospitals—just as they did with the Nightingale Covid-19 hospitals around Britain,” said Joan. “But it was clear that these would never open because where would all the staff come from?”

“For me, the biggest mistake that the government has made in this pandemic is putting profits before people. Doing that was always going to end in disaster.”

Joan Pons Laplana spoke to Socialist Worker in his capacity as a Unison union rep. A longer interview can be found at bit.ly/nursespeaksout

A third of patients ill again

ALMOST A third of recovered Covid-19 patients will end up back in hospital within five months—and one in eight will die, shocking new figures have shown.

Research by Leicester university and the Office for National Statistics found there is a devastating long-term toll on survivors of severe coronavirus. Many people are developing heart problems, diabetes and chronic liver and kidney conditions.

Out of 47,780 people discharged from hospital during the first wave,

29.4 percent were readmitted to hospital within 140 days, and over 12 percent died.

The figures mean the government’s calculation of the Covid-19 deaths, which only includes those who die within 28 days of a positive coronavirus test, are misleading.

Thousands of deaths are simply not being counted. It is now vital the NHS puts in place a comprehensive monitoring programme for all Covid-19 patients, including those suffering with long term symptoms.



Monitoring needed

VACCINE

Jab hesitancy a result of racism

WHO’S TO blame if black people refuse the jab?

Newspaper reports last weekend were filled with reports that black people in Britain will refuse the coronavirus vaccine.

A University of Essex study showed that some 71.8 percent of “black or black British” people surveyed said they were either unlikely or very unlikely to get vaccinated.

Some journalists were quick to make the assumption that black people’s reticence was due to “superstitious” beliefs and falling for “fake news”.

But there are many valid reasons why black people in Britain are sceptical about the state and the

Giving people real choices will alleviate concerns

provision of healthcare.

Racism impacts every area of health—from birth, where black women are a staggering five times more likely than white women to die in pregnancy or childbirth—to death.

For instance, studies show black ethnic groups face above average rates of dementia, but are less likely to get a timely diagnosis.

Dr Trisha Greenhaigh argues that health authorities need to form “genuine partnerships” with communities most at risk from Covid-19.

That means involving black people in the design of the vaccination programme.

That could mean planning specific publicity campaigns, choosing where to make vaccinations available, and finding out exactly what is putting some people off getting vaccinated—and addressing their concerns.

It means giving black people ownership of the programme, rather than leaving it in the hands of a government mired in racism.

Greenhaigh says, “If you asked inner-city minority ethnic communities to design a vaccination programme that worked for them, I bet half of Old Etonians would feel uncomfortable participating”.

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- Send ‘start’ to the number



Ban on use of best PPE puts health staff back in danger

FAILURE TO provide NHS workers with the highest grade personal protective equipment is putting lives at risk.

That's what a London paramedic and an occupational therapist working in the hardest hit east of the city have told Socialist Worker. "We spend a lot of time in sick people's houses but are only given the basic protection of a surgical mask, an apron and gloves," the NHS occupational therapist said.

It's a point echoed by many paramedics.

Many ambulances are waiting outside hospitals for several hours to transfer their patients. This means workers are forced to spend extended times inside their vehicle, often with very sick people.

But paramedics and technicians are only equipped with surgical masks or in some cases "FFP2" face masks, designed to offer moderate protection.

Surgical masks do not completely seal the face, and FFP2 masks do not filter as many particles as the FFP3 mask that ambulance workers are demanding.

Transmission

"The higher grade FFP3 respirators we should be using are currently reserved only for procedures where there is a danger of infectious aerosol transmission," the paramedic said.

"That might reflect Public Health England's guidelines, but no one on the frontline thinks this is safe.

"We now have a more virulent virus. The danger is not only to us as workers, but also to our patients. What if we've got the virus asymptotically and are waiting with a non Covid-19 patient in an ambulance for a long time?

"There's a real danger that we might pass it on to them. It's long past time that this guidance is changed."

The occupational therapist strongly agrees.

"Often we are very up close to our patients, moving and handling them. And we are supposed to do all this without

BACK STORY

Frontline workers are not being given high grade PPE

● This puts their lives at risk, and the vulnerable people they are helping

● Current guidance does not reflect the severity of the rising cases

● And the NHS is under increased strain as more staff are forced to self-isolate. Inions must now take action

using a FFP3 mask" she said.

"Management says that we can use the one FFP3 mask we are supplied with only in case of danger of Covid-19 transmission, but that we should 'use our judgment'.

"How can you know in advance if your patient is going to cough on you when you're helping them? By the time it's happened, it's too late to get your FFP3 mask on."

Health services across Britain are under incredible strain, and they are also being hit by large numbers of staff taking time off work with the virus or self-isolating.

The occupational therapist says half of her team has gone down with Covid-19, many in the last few weeks.

"Some people have got it quite severely and are still off sick from work," she said.

Many health unions are now appealing to health secretary Matt Hancock to change the guidelines on personal protective equipment for health workers.

But relying on a man whose track record on the virus ranges from inept to deadly is hardly a strategy.

Unions must show they are prepared to fight for those on the frontline.

FRONTLINE WORKERS are not routinely given the best protective equipment

Thousands of workers forced back to unsafe workplaces

THOUSANDS OF workers across England have felt pressured to return to workplaces, despite government advice to work from home.

And where safety concerns are raised, bosses are not held to account.

That's the message from a survey for the Royal Society for Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA).

It found that more than one in nine workers said they had been ordered back to work despite being able to work from home.

One in ten of people in insecure jobs said they had been to work within ten days of a positive Covid-19 test. The figure for workers overall is around one in 25.

Alan Lockey from the RSA said workers face a "terrible trade-off between health and putting food on the table".

"Millions feel forced to put themselves and others at risk because of insecure work, pressure from bosses and the failings of our deeply inadequate welfare state," he said.

Why are construction sites open?

The RSA figures expose the Tories' handling of the virus as utterly inadequate. For many people, working from home means losing pay or work.

The research also exposes the reality that dangerous workplaces are spreading the virus.

Virus outbreaks in England's workplaces shot up by nearly

70 percent in the first week of the national lockdown.

Around 175 outbreaks were reported, not including care homes, hospitals and schools.

Some 50 workers at a Tesco superstore in Stretford, Greater Manchester, are either ill or isolating after a coronavirus outbreak. A female manager at the store has died.

One worker said, "We are all petrified. It's such a surreal time and a lot of us are struggling."

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) was contacted 2,945 times between 6 and 14 January about safety issues in workplaces.

No firm has been prosecuted for breaking the rules.

And of the 97,000 safety cases the HSE has dealt with throughout the pandemic, just 0.1 percent have led to an improvement or prohibition notice.

One worker, who cleans portable toilets on construction sites, told BBC Radio 5 Live that he doesn't feel safe at work.

Yet he is "forced to carry on working so I can pay my bills".

Parents denied furlough payments by the bosses

A MAJORITY of parents who have asked for furlough to take care of their children while schools are shut have been refused by bosses.

New research from the TUC shows that some 71 percent of women and 75 percent of men were denied the request.

Evidence points to the latest lockdown and school closures as a crisis that is falling predominantly on women's shoulders.

Some 93 percent of respondents were women, despite the survey being aimed at mothers and fathers.

It is an insight into the desperate situations that many parents have been plunged into by the Tories' mishandling of the coronavirus pandemic.

"Just like in the first lockdown, mums are shouldering the majority of

childcare," said Frances O'Grady, TUC general secretary.

"Tens of thousands of mums have told us they are despairing.

Supervising

It's neither possible nor sustainable for them to work as normal, while looking after their children and supervising schoolwork."

But even under the Tories' insufficient furlough scheme, where 80 percent of wages are paid by the state, parents should be eligible to qualify.

Workers can be furloughed if they are "caring for children who are at home as a result of school and childcare facilities closing".

It is working class women in particular who are paying the highest price for the government's failures.

The Tories must be held to account for the horror they are

inflicting on people's lives.

School testing plans failed

THE TORIES are under pressure over their plans to reopen schools later this year. They hoped to get children back to school with the help of rapid virus tests.

But the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has not approved the tests to be used in this way.

The government wanted children and workers identified as close contacts of confirmed cases to

have daily tests to keep them in schools. But in trials, the lateral flow tests have failed to identify many positive Covid-19 cases.

The MHRA "continues to advise that close contacts of positive cases continue to self-isolate".

And several councils have closed nurseries despite Tory advice that they should remain open during the lockdown.

Brighton and Hove

council has closed its nurseries to all except vulnerable children and those with key worker parents.

Salford council has done the same.

Workers elsewhere are demanding the government closes nurseries to stop the spread of the virus.

They also want financial support to make sure that early years settings are not forced to close permanently as a result.

Tory plans risk care homes

THE TORIES are repeating mistakes from the murderous regime inflicted on older people during the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Department of Health and Social Care wants to discharge Covid-19 positive patients into care homes, despite the risk that poses to residents and workers.

It said if residents infected with the virus had been in isolation for 14 days during their hospital stay, they could be sent directly to care homes.

The guidance comes after coronavirus ripped through care home facilities in the first wave and slaughtered over 25,000 older and

vulnerable people. And the crisis is not over. Some 1,200 care home residents died from Covid-19 in England in the first week of January.

It's estimated some 400,000 care home residents in England are waiting for their first vaccine dose.

The Tories' policies continue to show their disdain for human life.

Socialist Worker
WHAT WE THINK

TURN RAGE AGAINST THE TORIES INTO ACTION

IT'S NOT a new phenomenon that the Tories are lurching from crisis to crisis. But the government's latest debacles over key elements of their coronavirus strategy has left them weak.

Earlier in January, Boris Johnson's government worked up a head of steam denying that schools were dangerous, and claiming they would remain open.

Key ministers were rolled out to defend sending children back into classrooms. Just hours later, a new lockdown was announced, including that schools would be shut to most students.

A week later, pictures of dire free school meals provided under the Tories' privatised system filled social media.

The Tories were forced to say that parents would receive vouchers to buy food instead.

Fury has built up about the level of callousness the government has shown towards people's lives.

And now there is Universal Credit (UC). The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) wants to steal a £20 a week payment from UC claimants.

The £20 a week addition to the usual extreme poverty rate was

added at the start of the pandemic but is due to run out in April.

That £20 a week represents 13 percent of an average recipient's UC money, or as high as 21 percent for some.

Cutting it is a disgusting attack on the same people who rely on free school meals and those who have turned out during a pandemic to perform low paid and critically important jobs.

In a non-binding Commons vote on Monday, Boris Johnson told his MPs to abstain on a Labour motion to keep the £20 payment.

The £6 billion it would cost the DWP is small change for this government. After all, it has stuffed billions into the pockets of big



Fury has built up about the level of recklessness that the government has shown

in Fife may have given false statements.

They claimed Sheku had attacked a female officer before being restrained.

The witness said the attack "never happened".

A public inquiry is ongoing into Sheku's death. Repeated deaths in custody lead to repeated inquiries.

It's good that people protest, and demand answers and justice. But the odds are stacked against them.

Not one officer has been

business. The Tories resent every penny given to what they regard as the wrong sort of people—those who live outside the gilded elite.

But they fear a repeat of the avalanche of anger that will come if they continue with the cut.

They are now considering various—wholly inadequate—alternatives to just pushing it through.

It's a familiar cycle of attack, outrage, crisis, partial retreat and then new attacks.

This weak but lethal government is ripe for removal. The most far-reaching retreats have come when workers take action, as education workers did to stop an unsafe return to schools.

We need far more action of that sort.

It won't come from Labour. Keir Starmer will denounce some Tory policies.

But as he drives the party rightwards, he doesn't have a vision of a different sort of society where ordinary people come before big business.

We have to build on the anger among working class people and turn it into action that can throw back and drive out the Tories.

successfully prosecuted over a death in custody. And figures released this week showed, when cops are found to have potentially committed gross misconduct, over 90 percent keep their jobs.

Police are violent and racist because their job is to uphold a violent and racist system.

We need to fight over every death in custody and every police assault.

But to end police brutality for good, we need to end the brutal system they serve.



ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



Stock market booms as economy suffers

THE MOST bizarre single feature of capitalism is probably the stock market. It seems to have the ability to defy mere economic reality. Back in the 1990s, Alan Greenspan, then chair of the US central bank, the Federal Reserve Board, complained about the market's "irrational exuberance".

Now we have irrational exuberance on stilts. We are in the grip of a deadly pandemic that is killing millions of people worldwide. Largely as a result, the world economy is suffering the deepest slump perhaps in its entire history.

Yet stock markets have been soaring, globally by 74 percent since March. Leading investment strategist Jeremy Grantham wrote at the start of the year, "The long, long bull market since 2009 has finally matured into a fully-fledged epic bubble."

"Featuring extreme over-valuation, explosive price increases, frenzied issuance, and speculative investor behaviour, I believe this event will be recorded as one of the great bubbles of financial history, right along with the South Sea bubble, 1929, and 2000."

So why this bubble in such dreadful circumstances? The first reason reflects the way the world economy has been managed since the global financial crisis of 2007-9.

Economic growth has been sluggish, reflecting the fact that the rate of profit is still below the peak it reached in the neoliberal era in 1997.

The turn to austerity around 2010 meant governments have not used fiscal policy—ie higher spending—to stimulate their economies. The gap has been filled by the central banks, which control monetary policy. They have kept interest rates very low and have run programmes of quantitative easing—ie buying government and corporate bonds as a way of pumping money into the financial system.

These policies have made it cheap for firms to borrow. But, because of low profitability, productive investment in new plant and equipment has been relatively low. A lot of the money has gone into the financial markets.

Launched

Companies have launched huge share buy-backs—in other words, they have bought their own shares. Boosting share prices keeps investors happy and increases the wealth of top executives.

There are also more short-term factors at work. According to the Financial Times newspaper, "Fund managers have largely mentally moved on from the coronavirus crisis. Faith in vaccines has taken over." This is almost certainly premature, but it has helped lift the share prices of sectors such as commodities and manufacturing.

Finally, there is the impact of politics. In Britain, there is relief that Brexit has taken place with a deal with the European Union, however bad. Joe Biden's advent as US president also promises a more predictable future.

In Britain the Bank of England's (BoE) monetary policy has operated effectively to finance the huge increase in public spending in response to the pandemic.

The government has been borrowing by selling more Treasury bonds (or gilts), which analysis by the Financial Times shows have been taken mainly by the BoE.

The paper reports that "investors are convinced the BoE bought an additional £450bn of gilts during the COVID-19 crisis in order to ease the government's huge programme of borrowing by keeping debt servicing costs at rock bottom."

Now Biden is promising a £1.4 trillion fiscal stimulus. Because the Democrats, after capturing the two Georgia Senate seats, will control both Houses of Congress, he may be able to implement his plans. They will also be financed by extra borrowing. So fiscal and monetary policy may be converging in the US as well.

The prospect that the stimulus may push up economic growth is also boosting share prices. These are helped also by probably exaggerated fears that all this extra spending will lead to a leap in inflation. Central banks would react to this by raising interest rates, which would make shares a more attractive investment than bonds.

So, more than a decade after the crash in 2007-8, the world economy remains on life support, propped up by central banks and governments. And, Grantham warns, like its predecessors, "this bubble will burst in due time".

PROTESTERS HAVE taken to the streets in Cardiff in the face of police repression and intimidation

Defiant action after Mohamud Hassan dies in police custody

by SAMORD

PROTESTERS are demanding justice for Mohamud Mohammed Hassan who died shortly after his release from police custody in Cardiff.

He was arrested on Friday 8 January following an alleged disturbance, but released without charge the following morning.

He died later that night. Mohamud's family claim he was assaulted while in custody.

His aunt, Zainab Hassan, said that he was released with "lots of wounds on his body".

"Nothing we do is going to bring him back but we will not rest for a second until we have justice," she said.

When Mohamud arrived home after his release, he is reported to have told a close friend, "Look fam, the police have beat the shit out of me."

A woman who lived close by said his tracksuit was covered in blood, he had severe injuries to his mouth and was severely bruised all over his body.

Since Tuesday of last week, hundreds of people have protested daily outside the police station.

Signs read, "South Wales Police must answer," while people chanted, "Black Lives Matter," and "Release the footage."

Protester Bianca Ali slammed calls for patience

and calm. "The officers involved are still on duty," she told Socialist Worker.

"We want to be a part of the investigation, a short line every day from South Wales Police isn't good enough."

"It doesn't shock me that Boris Johnson and Keir Starmer haven't commented."

"It confirms to me that the whole system is racist."

Many protesters were frustrated by the media describing them as angry and violent.

"We have a right to be angry," said Bianca.

"That comes from a place

Mohamud Mohammed Hassan

of passion and heartbreak."

Catrin Evans, director of the IOPC police "watchdog" in Wales, said, "Preliminary indications are that there is no physical trauma injury to explain a cause of death."

But solicitor Hilary Brown, who is acting for the family, said, "We want somebody to try to explain to us why a young, healthy man was arrested by South Wales Police with no apparent injuries to his body and as a result of being released from Cardiff Bay police station was badly marked with bruising and cuts, and within hours was dead."

"We need somebody to explain to us whether the injuries he sustained either before being taken to Cardiff Bay police station or while at Cardiff Bay police played any part in his death."

Stand Up To Racism Cardiff in a statement said, "We call for this investigation to be swift and transparent."

"Historically, South Wales Police has seen numerous officers charged for crimes, including the rape of two women and has helped to convict and falsely imprison black men for murder."

"It is not just, and it continually shows us where their loyalty lies."

Fundraiser for legal fees and funeral costs
bit.ly/CardiffJustice
Sign the justice petition at
bit.ly/justiceforMohamud

Demonstrators fined

POLICE IN Cardiff and London have moved to fine protesters involved in demonstrations over the death of Mohamud Hassan.

Four people were arrested in London last Saturday and more were fined.

A protester who received a £200 fine told Socialist Worker, "We were in Parliament Square and a large number of police told us that we needed to disperse."

"They said they were going to give me a slip, and if I tried to

leave, they said they would arrest me.

"I asked them what this meant, and they said I was getting a £200 fine."

Bianca Ali in Cardiff, has also been told she will have to pay £500 under new coronavirus laws.

The Black Lives Matter Cardiff group said, "The police took two riot vans to Bianca's house and were banging repeatedly on her door."

"Please tell us why, other than disgusting intimidation tactics, that was needed?"

Labour woos bosses and dumps left wing policies

A series of speeches by leading Labour figures have mapped out a further shift right, says Nick Clark

KEIR STARMER and some of his top shadow ministers have mapped out the Labour Party's path back to the right.

In a series of speeches over the past week they promised a return to support for the US, long prison time for criminals and cooperation with bankers.

Each speech was designed to show Labour has ditched the left wing politics of previous leader Jeremy Corbyn.

Speaking on Saturday, Starmer declared Labour was proudly "pro-American".

This means that Labour supports the US as the dominant power, propped up by wars and economic blackmail.

His message was that the anti-war politics of the left have been pushed back to the margins of the Labour Party.

US politicians and military officials viewed Corbyn as a challenge because of his longstanding opposition to US wars and nuclear weapons.

Starmer wanted to show them that, under his leadership, the Labour Party is back on their side.

He claimed in his speech that Labour would be "a moral force for good in the world".

But support for the US president Joe Biden—a champion of US wars in Iraq, Syria and Libya—is at the heart of this.

Ministers

Starmer's speech was one of several by Labour shadow ministers to the Fabian Society, where Labour thinkers outline their politics.

Shadow home secretary Nick Thomas-Symonds said Labour would tackle police racism—by recruiting more police.

He wanted to show that Labour could be "trusted on policing", which means more support for the cops.

His main criticism of Tory home secretary Priti Patel was that she had failed to "terrify criminals" as she had promised to do.

Earlier in the week, Labour

BACK STORY

Labour leader Keir Starmer is marking a break with the politics of former leader Jeremy Corbyn

- Starmer wants to reassure bosses and bankers that Labour will be "responsible" if elected
- That means ditching promises to spend more on jobs, pay, services and the climate crisis
- Top Labour figures also want a break with anti-war politics
- The moves underline the fact that Labour will not stand up for ordinary people

shadow chancellor Anneliese Dodds promised in a speech to top bankers that Labour would be a "responsible government".

She said Labour would focus on "value for money and financial control" and "ensure public money is spent effectively and wisely".

That means Labour has dropped Corbyn's left wing pledges to spend more money on jobs, pay, public services and the climate crisis.

Dodds said Labour wouldn't make "eye-catching announcements designed to raise expectations today, only for them to be dashed tomorrow".

It was a swipe at Corbyn's previous leadership.

The speeches all mark a betrayal of Starmer's promise to "defend the legacy of Jeremy Corbyn"—a promise he never meant to keep.

Starmer is showing that Labour's leaders can ignore their promises to members, and decisions made at conferences, whenever they want.

He wants to make sure Labour will return to being a party that doesn't challenge the rich or the status quo.

His Labour is not a party that can be relied on to stand up for ordinary people.



More online...

Labour promises responsible government bit.ly/responsibleLabour



BRITISH GAS workers on strike on 7 January in London

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

'Fire and rehire will be the norm if we don't fight,' says British Gas striker

by SOPHIE SQUIRE

THOUSANDS OF British Gas workers were set to strike on Wednesday and Friday this week, and Monday next week.

British Gas's parent company Centrica wants to fire workers and rehire them on worse pay, terms and conditions.

It has threatened to make widespread redundancies if workers don't sign the new contracts.

Profits

Workers are furious that bosses are trying to make their lives worse while lining their own pockets. In 2019 Centrica grabbed profits of £901 million.

Over 500 people attended an online strike rally on Monday night to show their solidarity with the strike.

Ciara, a British Gas engineer, explained why it is vital that workers stop the new contracts.

"Fire and rehire will become the norm if we don't fight back," she said. "This is not just about us, this is about all workers."

Jack Bowden, GMB union national secretary said, "The

scale of the cuts and changes the business has said it will impose by fire and rehire is not justified.

"It's entirely unnecessary and these figures lay that bare."

Centrica has disgracefully tried to attack the workers, saying they shouldn't take action during the pandemic.

It claimed the GMB leadership is "intent on causing disruption to customers during the coldest time of the year, amid a global health crisis and in the middle of a national lockdown".

But it's the bosses' decision to savage workers during the pandemic that is to blame for the disruption.

Other unions should be acting in solidarity with the strike, not making cosy deals with the company.

British Gas workers, many of whom have worked at the company for over a decade, have taken to Twitter to explain why they are taking action.

This week's action follows a successful strike by 7,000 workers over the plans earlier this month.

The action caused significant disruption. Around 100,000 homes are currently waiting for a British

Gas service. Strikers say the public is on their side and their action has been met with widespread support on social media.

Paul, an engineer from the Midlands, told the rally, "The progress that we made in the first five days of the strike was fantastic."

"Going into our next round of strikes it has become clear we won't be divided or defeated."

Contracts

Paul said that taking action has boosted workers' morale.

"We have had people who have felt bullied into going into work," he said. "Now they don't feel alone."

"If we keep this unity we can win."

Further strikes are set for 29, 30 and 31 January and 1 February.

A victory for British Gas workers would be a boost for all those facing fire and rehire attacks.

It would show that it is possible to push back against employers, even during a pandemic.

Send solidarity to British Gas workers at gmb.org.uk/campaign/back-british-gas-workers



Divide and rule tactics fail to stop Indian farmers' protests

THE INDIAN state is turning to repression after an attempt last week to derail a nationwide farmers' protest movement with a judges' inquiry failed.

Several high profile people supporting the farmers have been slapped with "notices of investigation" by the feared National Investigation Agency.

Ministers allege that the movement—which is centred on the state of Punjab, but which involves millions of farmers across India—is a cover for Punjabi separatists.

The allegation is nonsense and reflects a growing panic among India's rulers in New Delhi.

The country's highest court last week decided to suspend temporarily the implementation of new farming laws that have given rise to the weeks-long protest movement.

But far from being a victory for those besieging the capital, the move was a ruling class ruse designed to demobilise the movement.

Scorn

Farmers' leaders rightly poured scorn on the judge's offer of an "inquiry".

The hard right government of Narendra Modi and his BJP party rushed through the new laws last year.

They reduce state support for farmers and create more space for giant agribusiness firms to take over.

But a huge movement of farmers has spread across India with thousands blocking the main roads into Delhi. A "tractor protest" planned for India's Republic Day on Tuesday next week could see hundreds of thousands of farm vehicles bring India to a halt.

India's most powerful judges, fearful that such actions could trigger a far wider protest against the government, have intervened.

They have suspended the implementation of the new laws while a commission, chosen from their

own ranks, investigates the issue. They hoped this would be enough to get farmers' leaders to end their protests.

But it soon became clear that three of the four judges asked to preside over the "investigation" have already publicly supported the farming laws. A fourth judge said he supported them with a few reservations.

"This is the government's tactic to reduce pressure on itself," said Balbir Singh Rajewal, a leader of one of the farmer unions.

"All the committee members are pro-government. All are people who so far justified the government laws—they are writing articles to justify the government law.

"We have decided that our agitation will continue."

Nervousness

The judges' attempt to end the movement is a sign of growing nervousness among the ruling class.

The best way to counter Modi's challenges is not only to continue escalating the farmers' protests, but to spread the resistance still further.

Already, groups calling themselves "farmers' daughters" have declared they too are ready to descend on the capital.

Many are learning to drive tractors so they can lead the protests at the end of January.

They should be joined by the millions of workers in India's giant trade unions.

Workers have their own battles with the government, and last year held a massive one-day general strike. Since then some union leaders have talked about a prolonged strike, held partly in support of the farmers.

Workers and farmers together is the stuff of Modi's nightmares.



On other pages...

Israeli group labels regime 'apartheid' >>>Page 17

Palestine Authority to vote

THE PALESTINIAN Authority (PA) has said it will have its first elections in 15 years, set to take place in May and July.

PA president Mahmoud Abbas said the elections would run in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem.

The announcement comes as Abbas tries to revive the sham "peace process" with Israel after Joe Biden becomes US president.

Yet that process has given the PA only limited power in the

West Bank—and allowed Israel control over Palestinian politics.

Israel and the US overturned the results of the last Palestinian elections held in 2006.

Palestinians voted for Abbas's rival, the resistance group Hamas, because it promised to continue fighting the occupation.

The US, Israel and Abbas arranged a coup against Hamas and placed the Gaza Strip, where Hamas still rules, under a siege that is still in place.

FARMERS IN Amritsar prepare to set off for a protest in New Delhi

Action in France wins gains for nurses as health workers gear up for a strike

HEALTH UNIONS and patient groups were set for a day of strikes and protests across France on Thursday this week.

The organisers say they are "denouncing the deterioration of the working conditions of staff as well as the problems faced by patients".

"Despite the commitment of staff, the situation is getting worse during the current pandemic," they said. "Workers and students are exhausted and angry at the lack of beds and staff."

Demanding

They are demanding 10 percent less working time, 10 percent more staff, a 10 percent pay rise and 10 percent more training time.

This is in addition to a pay rise announced last July.

The action comes on the back of a stunning victory as a result of a health workers' strike and occupation.

Nurses and nursing assistants in the paediatric unit of the Toulouse

University Hospital struck last Monday over increasingly desperate conditions and extreme staff shortages.

They also occupied their block of the hospital. This left only emergency cover functioning.

Workers were protesting at a recent failure to replace 12 nurses, and management's demands that they work beyond their usual hours without pay.

Workers won on most of their demands after 24 hours of strike and occupations. Eight new nurses will be recruited as well as other staff.

Any overtime work will be paid and voluntary.

"It's a real step forward, and we know that we were taking this action for all the people who use our services," one of the occupiers told local media.

"It is not easy to stop work during a pandemic but we had to do it. Sometimes it is our duty to say no even when everything is shouting at us to say yes."

Now there needs to be a national victory.

The government of president Emmanuel Macron is pressing ahead with cuts even in the middle of a pandemic.

Dozens of intensive care units across France are earmarked for closure in the next four years. And health spending is set to be cut by £3.5 billion.

Fate

The Inter-Urgences group of paramedics, which is helping to organise the strike, urged its supporters to avoid the fate of Britain.

It said, "England has been a pioneer in the privatisation and streamlining of the health care system. Now during Covid-19 the public hospitals are on the verge of being overwhelmed."

This week's action could help to launch a stronger defence of the health system and those who work in it.

Charlie Kimber

From union leader to a Lord

I WAS really delighted and heartened by the former Unite union leader Tony Woodley initially rejecting the offer of a peerage.

The former Transport and General Workers Union general secretary refused the gong.

He thanked those who had offered it to him. But stated, "After careful reflection I have decided not to accept the peerage offered so I would prefer to follow the example of my hero and mentor Jack Jones, the greatest man to hold that job, and not accept a peerage."

This was wonderful to me.

All too often those who say that they oppose the Lords can't wait to don the ermine when they are offered such a position.

People like John Prescott, Roy Hattersley and Neil Kinnock spring to mind.

The three said that they hated the Lords. But, once offered the peerages, they crept in with a variety of excuses.

When I saw a petition recently with the name Lord Woodley on as one of the signatories, I had a double take.

Sadly Woodley had jumped ship.

Lord Woodley has sat in the House of Lords since November.

I wonder what Lord Woodley's hero and mentor would now say to this? I think we know.

How could anyone accept an honour from this Tory government?

C Stoll
Dudley



ILLUSTRATION: JIM SANDERS

Blame the government for the pressures of online education

I WRITE as a grandparent of two primary age grandchildren and as a retired teacher. I think there is a lot of pressure from the department for education on heads to try to force their staff to provide huge amounts of work for their pupils.

I think this is totally unrealistic for staff, parents and children. Even with good internet access, hours and hours online isn't good for either children or for adults.

Why are they putting this pressure on?

Could it be to punish education staff and their unions for having the temerity to go against the government mantra of "schools are safe"?

I would like to encourage all parents who feel that their school is giving unrealistic amounts of

work to their children to tell them that they are.

Otherwise they won't know that's the way that families feel.

This will also give schools evidence for Ofsted if they come calling. Well done to the schools that are setting realistic and imaginative work for children.

But online work should be realistic for every child as well as their parents and school staff.

We're in this situation for at least six weeks—it has been doable for both children and adults could suffer from higher levels of mental distress.

Penny Foskett
Portsmouth

AS PUPILS started back at school in Scotland on Monday, the online learning platform being

used by many schools collapsed.

However, John Swinney, the Scottish education secretary, has made the decision that the quality of online teaching should be assessed by inspectors immediately.

So the priority for him is to harass teachers at a time when they are burdened with new teaching methods, extra internal assessment and, of course, the threat of Covid-19.

This is typical of the Scottish government's attitude to teachers.

Teaching unions should oppose this harassment and demand more support for pupils and staff now.

Charlotte Ahmed
Glasgow

We can force the Tories out—permanently

WE ARE at the start of a familiar formula, where a Tory promise is made and lies are delivered.

We saw it when A-level students' results were messed with. And when free school meal vouchers were set to be cancelled and then they weren't.

Now the Tories have made a partial U-turn again over giving vouchers to children on free school meals. Photos had circulated of private companies providing horrendous food parcels.

What can we learn from these incidents? That our government is incompetent and profit driven? We already knew that.

But with every single one of these decisions people took action. They criticised the government through social media, unions and organised protests.

We can make the government turn around. And so, we have the power to push the Tories out altogether.

Jeandre Coester
Liverpool

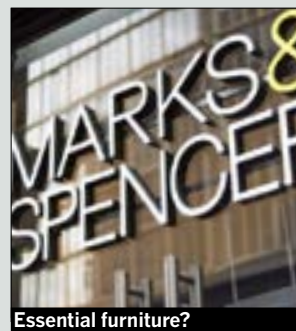
I WORK for Wincanton Portbury in Bristol.

I am a driver's mate for non-essential furniture for Marks and Spencer and we are currently being forced to deliver to over 1,000 homes a week.

We have been told we are not allowed to go on furlough as we are key workers. This is a lie but we have to do it or face losing our job.

We have raised grievances about this and health and safety concerns to our HR department.

But we are continually



being ignored and forced to put our health and our families' health at risk.

Our manager is also giving some of our

colleagues disciplinarys for taking time off to get Covid-19 checks.

We have a union representative but many of us feel that the company is trying to get rid of him.

Wincanton has lied to the government saying we are all tradesmen.

But we only deliver flat pack furniture. We deliver for firms such as Marks & Spencer, Loaf, The White Company and Swell just to name a few.

We have not been listened to by the company.

Ralph
Bristol

Just a thought...

Johnson is no celebrity

SINCE HE was first elected to the house of commons in 2001, Boris Johnson hasn't seemed to have any problems finding work.

Despite his regular brand of casual racism, xenophobia, sexism and homophobia something about Johnson's personality clearly appeals to the public.

But now it's time for the prime minister to stop being a celebrity, and—in a time when the country needs it most—become a leader.

George Palmer-Soady
Warwick

Don't punish XR rebels

THERE'S obviously not enough going on in this country that they have to persecute innocent Extinction Rebellion protesters (Socialist Worker, 14 January).

Carol Robinson
On Facebook

NON-compliance works. Don't pay any fines, don't give names or addresses. You maybe can't beat the system but you can put a big spanner in the works.

Thomas Ness
On Facebook

Bumbling Tory pesticides

IT COMES as an unsurprising sting to hear of the government's approval of bee-harming pesticides which even the EU have banned.

The approval of this pesticide for the specific use on sugar beets could open agricultural practices in Britain to further deregulation.

Sadly, Boris Johnson's approach to the biodiversity crisis is the same as the Covid-19 crisis. This is to ignore the best scientific evidence and put all responsibility on the general public.

Josh Largent
East London

Unite bosses feel pinch

IT WAS great to hear that stock prices of Unite student accommodation have been falling rapidly.

It serves the bosses right for forcing students to stay in rental contracts during a pandemic.

Leah
Newcastle

A revolution in Egypt in 2011 overthrew a brutal dictator and gave a glimpse of how society could be run differently. Egyptian revolutionary **Hossam el-Hamalawy** tells the story of the revolt and looks at the lessons it holds for struggle today

TEN YEARS ago this month, millions of Egyptians took to the streets in a revolution against the country's dictator. The uprising lasted for 18 days, before it forced Hosni Mubarak to step down.

He had ruled the country with an iron fist for roughly three decades. The revolution should be celebrated and remembered.

The Egyptian Revolution was largely presented in the media as a revolt by “internet savvy” youth using social media and smartphones to organise a sudden revolt. This was mistaken, but it suited some groups in and out of Egypt.

It suited the Egyptian middle class, which was suffering under Mubarak's neoliberal reforms. It wanted a limited revolt to change the head of the regime, and hopefully introduce some liberal political reforms to allow it a bigger say in how the country was run.

It suited the Egyptian army generals, who were shocked by the revolt. They wanted a quick end to the unrest in the streets, with cosmetic political changes.

These would leave power structures largely unchanged and safeguard the privileges of the military institutions.

It suited the Western backers of the Egyptian regime, who for three decades had armed and financed Mubarak.

They saw him as an essential force for regional stability, the continuous flow of oil, and protection of the Israeli state and Suez Canal. The Western imperial powers were concerned a radical change in the most populous Arab country could threaten their class interests.

The reality, however, was different from their narrative of a “Facebook” revolution.

The January 2011 revolution was a product of an entire decade of struggles that were brewing in Egypt. They started with pro-Palestinian protests that swept the country in autumn 2000.

The movement revived street politics, and won a limited margin that had not existed previously, within which it could organise against the regime.

After three years of continuous mobilisations, the Palestine solidarity and anti-Iraq war movements metamorphosed into Kefaya, Arabic for “Enough”. This took on Mubarak and his plans to have his son Gamal succeed him.

Kefaya's protests did not go beyond a few thousand. But they electrified the country. The rise of satellite television channels, which took its slogans

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The torture and murder of a middle class man was enough to spark an uprising



and messages to large sections of the population in Egypt and abroad, helped.

Among those who followed the gradual erosion of Mubarak's grip on society were the Egyptian workers. They had borne the brunt of the neoliberal reforms implemented by Mubarak and his son's associates and cronies.

In December 2006, thousands of women workers in the Nile Delta town of Mahalla, which housed the largest textile mill in the Middle East, struck over pay. They called on their male colleagues to join action.

The mill struck and forced the government to concede, triggering a wave of mass strikes across the country's textile sector. Strikes then spread to virtually all other industrial and service sectors.

Escalated

Mass strikes within the factories' compounds soon developed into local uprisings in the streets of Mahalla, and later other smaller towns in the north. Farmers' clashes with the police over land escalated. Protests by the urban poor in the capital and the provinces over housing issues became almost daily news. Anti-police brutality riots fuelled a vibrant human rights movement. The Coptic Christian minority held a series of mass demonstrations against religious sectarian violence, and demanding an end to discrimination.

On the eve of January 2011, Egypt was a classic case of what Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin described as a “revolutionary situation”.

Lenin said this occurs “when it is impossible for the ruling classes to maintain their rule without any change; when there is a crisis, in one form or another, among the ‘upper classes’, a crisis in the policy of the ruling class, leading to a fissure through which the discontent and indignation of the oppressed classes burst forth. For a revolution to take place, it is usually insufficient for ‘the lower classes not to want’ to live in the old way; it is also necessary that ‘the upper classes should be unable’ to rule in the old way.”

Fear of Mubarak and his police was

STRIKING oil workers picketing the oil ministry in Cairo (above). During the revolution, revolutionary socialists can finally operate in the open. They celebrate by selling their paper, The Socialist, outside Tahrir Square in central Cairo (below)

PICTURE: HOSSAM EL-HAMALAWY



10 YEARS SINCE THE EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION

18 DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD

largely gone. The torture and murder of an middle class young man, Khaled Said, was enough to spark an uprising.

Had the murder of Khaled Said happened in 2000 or 2007, it would not have triggered an uprising. In fact, Mubarak's torture machine had been producing victims and dead corpses regularly, almost on a daily basis.

But only after a decade of accumulating dissent and anger did the Egyptian people feel the courage to take on the regime and its security apparatus. They did so on 25 January, the National Police Day.

The 18-day uprising witnessed heroic fights in Tahrir, whose images were aired to the rest of the globe.

Despite the heroism in the squares, however, it was largely the factories that brought down the dictator.

The protests that started in Tahrir soon spread to workplaces. Every single sector went on strike. The military junta had to rush to force Mubarak out, or else the entire regime might

collapse. The overthrow of Mubarak was enough to end the protests—temporarily—in the public squares. But the strikes in the factories and the ministries' civil service were only starting.

The strikes had common demands—for job security, independent trade unions and the impeachment of corrupt bosses who were part of Mubarak's ruling National Democratic Party.

The military junta denounced

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The January 2011 revolution was a product of an entire decade of struggles brewing in Egypt

the strikes, but so did sections of revolutionaries.

They regarded the workers as “selfish” instead of seeing the strike wave as the embodiment of the fight for social justice slogans raised in Tahrir.

Dominated

A genuine mass revolutionary party, that could provide leadership for the strike wave, didn't exist. So the revolution was dominated by the reformist opposition. It pushed for a polarisation in the political scene along secular/Islamist lines, instead of polarisation over class.

This opened the door for agents of the Mubarak regime to rebrand themselves as a dissident revolutionary force against the mainstream Islamists (the Muslim Brotherhood) and the Salafis.

The army generals were happy to ally themselves with the Islamists in the first two years of the revolution. The Islamists promised to end the revolt in the streets and protect the military's share of the cake. Yet the alliance became shaky when it became clear the Muslim

Brotherhood could neither co-opt the revolt nor diffuse it.

The military in secret reached out to the secular opposition (leftists, Arab nationalists, liberals), and secured its backing for a coup in July 2013. What followed were the biggest massacres in Egypt's modern history, amid the cheering of the Egyptian leftists.

They dubbed the counter-revolution, led by General el-Sisi, a “war on religious fascism.” It was only a matter of time before el-Sisi finished off the Islamists and turned his attention to the left and liberals.

The picture in Egypt today, a decade after the uprising, is bleak. El-Sisi's prisons house roughly 60,000 political prisoners of all shades, including socialist comrades. All independent unions have been crushed. Youth movements

A meeting of transport workers in Cairo during the revolution (below)

PICTURE: HOSSAM EL-HAMALAWY



A meeting of transport workers in Cairo during the revolution (above) Hosni Mubarak (below)



‘We were afraid of dying. Now we’re not afraid of anything’

THE EGYPTIAN Revolution gave hope to socialists across the globe and showed the power of ordinary people.

Then Socialist Worker editor Judith Orr was in Egypt the day after Hosni Mubarak fell. She wrote that Cairo was “filled with a collective roar of celebration”.

“This truly was a festival of the oppressed,” reported Judith.

“Women, men, young and old—who never thought they would see this day—danced, sang and cheered in their tens of thousands.”

People were transformed. Protester Mohammed said, “We wanted to breathe free. We decided we can do this, we did do this.

“We were afraid of dying, but now we are not afraid of anything.”

Author Ahdaf Soueif told Socialist Worker at the time, “The revolution has set loose a giant creative energy with slogans, chants, stand-up comedy and street art.”

It also showed how ordinary people can run things for themselves.

Volunteers organised in Cairo's Tahrir Square to keep out undercover cops. Doctors helped those injured fighting the regime's forces. Teachers gave lessons in the square.

A huge strike wave saw tens of thousands of workers walk out of offices, factories, textile mills, ports, hospitals, schools and universities.

Workers who struck in solidarity with the “youth of Tahrir” went on to demand the sacking of bullying bosses—and a say in how their workplaces were run.

Revolutionary socialist Wamukota said at the time, “People in struggle collectively made the decisions and called the shots. This is something we could not have imagined.

“Every day we started with anxiety. Every day people exceeded our expectations.”

As Socialist Worker put it, “Mubarak is gone. It wasn't the army who brought him down. It wasn't politicians. It wasn't foreign troops. It was a revolution made by millions of ordinary Egyptians.”

and political parties have either been co-opted, besieged or paralysed.

Wildcat strikes break out every now and then, in addition to sporadic unrest over home demolitions. The Egyptian security services, with the full backing of the West, are embroiled in a dirty war, in the name of fighting terror. Summary executions, arrest of suspects' families, torture—all have become normal again.

Counter-revolutions do not simply restore the status quo. They regress society to a lower bar on all levels and fronts.

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It is not wishful thinking to say there will be another Egyptian revolution

It is not wishful thinking to say there will be another Egyptian Revolution in the future. The underlying demands that ignited the 2011 revolt (bread, freedom and social justice) have not been met.

And the military dictatorship cannot provide solutions for such structural problems. El-Sisi's policies are only making matters worse.

But a revolution will not simply break out because the people are suffering, or the economic situation is bad. There has to be hope that, if the Egyptian people take the risk and confront the regime, there will be a positive outcome.

Regaining confidence in actions from below will take time. And it may require a long chain of smaller struggles that will eventually accumulate and snowball.

This must go hand in hand with trying to rebuild the organisations that could sustain the mobilisation—independent trade unions and revolutionary parties.

Such recovery from the defeat will not take a short time. But the next time we will be more ready, and hopefully we will have learned lessons.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism.

In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women.

We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We oppose discrimination against disabled people including those who experience mental distress.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests.

We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602

Socialist Workers Party online meetings



Big Pharma, the Tories and Covid-19 Can a vaccine solve the crisis?

BIRMINGHAM
Wed 27 Jan, 7pm
281-634-5938

LONDON: ISLINGTON
Thu 28 Jan, 7pm
874-012-7970

SWANSEA & WEST WALES
Thu 28 Jan, 7pm
902-964-963

LIVERPOOL
Wed 27 Jan, 7pm
493-925-5919

LONDON: NEWHAM
Wed 27 Jan, 7.30pm
288-098-8827

LONDON: HACKNEY
Thu 28 Jan,
7.30pm
798-534-2585

LONDON: WEST AND NORTHWEST
Thu 28 Jan, 7.30pm
834-3932-1796

BLACK COUNTRY
What will a future socialist society look like?
Wed 27 Jan, 7.30pm
352 891 2411

BRADFORD
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Four icons of black liberation argue racism and resistance

One Night in Miami imagines a real life meeting between heroes of the Civil Rights Movement—and brings intense debates to life, says **Anthony Hamilton**

ONE NIGHT in Miami is a powerful meeting of black icons and friends who hold nothing back when debating racism, resistance and what it means to be free.

It's a fictionalised telling of a meeting between Malcolm X, American footballer player turned movie star Jim Brown, soul singer Sam Cooke and heavyweight boxer Muhammad Ali.

I started with a little hesitation, focusing on the specific portrayal of each character and whether they hit the mark.

But after a slow start that critical lens slipped away and I could see that this film was about so much more.

As an adaptation from a stage play it carries over really well.

The first act is about the racism the four icons are faced with.

The second looks at what they are going to do about it.

The opening scenes show the blatant racism each has to deal with.

There's the way casual way the word "nigger" is thrown at Brown after a seemingly friendly encounter. Or there's a walkout of diners at the Copacabana when Cooke steps onto the stage.

By the second act when Ali—then Cassius Clay—has just become world champion, Malcolm X invites the others to his hotel room to celebrate.

This is the time when they should be able to relax—there are no cameras, no expectations and no white people around.

Yet things heat up as Clay announces his decision to join the Nation of Islam (NOI).

Malcolm X berates Cooke for misusing his platform for his own benefit, and Brown squares up to one of Malcolm X's bodyguards.



ALDIS HODGE, Kingsley Ben-Adir, Leslie Odom Jr and Eli Goree in *One Night in Miami*

Cooke and Brown argue for economic freedom, while Malcolm X poses the need for organisation.

It's the first time I've seen on screen a very real, heated and meaningful debate between black people about the nature of black power.

On top of this each character is well developed and has a depth of emotion and vulnerability, especially in the depiction of Malcolm X.

He had been silenced by the NOI for saying the Kennedy assassination

was the "chickens coming home to roost". He was about to leave, hoping to bring Clay with him.

The film brilliantly shows the stress that he must have been under, culminating in tears when alone with Brown.

By the end I felt energised and empowered thinking over the intensity of the debate while Cooke sings "A Change Is Gonna Come" for the first time.

It's always difficult when tackling

such huge questions to find a satisfying way to end given that there is no simple solution for racism.

I do have criticisms of the film, but I really don't think they matter. It would be nit-picking over a film that does a great job at encouraging critical thought.

There are so many reasons—especially given the past year—why I recommend everyone to watch this.

One Night in Miami is available to stream now on Amazon Prime

The ravages of coronavirus amid the war on Yemen

TELEVISION

YEMEN: CORONAVIRUS IN A WARZONE

Available now at bbc.co.uk/iplayer

BBC ARABIC'S Nawal al Maghafi is the first reporter to enter Yemen since the outbreak of Covid-19.

Almost six years into an horrific war, Yemen is often forgotten about.

What al Maghafi finds there is shocking.

In the north of the country, controlled by the

armed Houthi movement, a blockade imposed by Saudi Arabia has caused a shortage of medicine.

And lorries that carry supplies have to wait days for petrol. While the US arms and backs the Saudi coalition, it also cuts medical aid to the World Health Organisation that paid for doctors.

In an interview, Houthi health minister Taha al-Motawakel is keen to focus on the damage the Saudi-led war has wrought.

But he refuses to give



Dr Zoha Aidaroos was left to run Aden's only open hospital

even the numbers of people infected.

It's up to doctors in the capital Sanaa to explain how the virus's spread was catastrophic "from the beginning".

"Hospitals are full. Many have died. Many health workers and doctors have lost their lives."

In the south, supposedly controlled by a Western-backed government, there's also catastrophe.

Hospitals in Aden were overwhelmed—unable to save a single person. All but one shut down.

At times it feels as if the documentary wants to focus too much on the failings of the Houthi government rather than the war that wreaks misery.

But then it ends back in the north with eight year old Hassan, malnourished, and in constant pain.

"Handing us aid while supporting this war will only create thousands of children like Hassan," says one nurse. "All these countries desperate to get a vaccine. Can't they find a vaccine that will end this war of ours?"

DOCUMENTARY

MAYOR

Available to stream at watch.dogwoof.com/film/mayor £4.99

MAYOR IS a political saga following Musa Hadid, the Christian mayor of Ramallah, during his second term in office.

Surrounded on all sides by Israeli settlements and soldiers, most people in Ramallah will never have the chance to travel more than a few miles outside their home.

Mayor Hadid is determined to make the city a beautiful and dignified place to live.

His ultimate mission—to end the occupation of Palestine. Rich with detailed



Musa Hadid

observation and a surprising amount of humour, Mayor poses a question—how do you run a city when you don't have a country?

It also, perhaps unwittingly, exposes the failures of the "peace process" and the two-state solution.

TELEVISION

SILENCED: THE HIDDEN STORY OF DISABLED BRITAIN

Available now at bbc.co.uk/iplayer

WRITER, ACTOR and presenter Carrie Burnell uncovers the hidden history of how disabled people have fought back.

She discovers how modern attitudes to disabled people were first formed in Victorian workhouses.



Campaigner Alia Hassan

She also meets campaigners such as Alia Hassan, who brought the streets of London to a standstill in order to be allowed to get on a bus.

Alexandra Kollontai was a leading Russian revolutionary, who tirelessly fought for socialism and women's liberation during the only successful working class revolution in history.

In a new book *Writings from the Struggle*, author Cathy Porter compiles a vital selection of Kollontai's literature. All are new translations, and all but three pieces are translated into English for the first time.

Porter told *Socialist Worker*, "What struck me was how she wrote about the war, class and struggle—for her women's liberation was part of a bigger struggle.

"I wanted to give people hope in these hard and bleak times."

Kollontai was a true trailblazer.

She was a leader in newly socialist Russia, a pioneering thinker and someone who fought for transformative changes in the lives of ordinary people.

Kollontai worked to build a mass movement of workers, which centrally involved women, arguing a revolution was impossible without a united working class.

For years, she fought for a socialist society and believed this was the only way to truly liberate women from exploitation and oppression.

The book describes how "Kollontai joined the Bolsheviks and became a full-time party activist" in December 1904.

She smuggled leaflets into factories, organised women's meetings and was inspired to write literature for the Bolsheviks after strikes and riots spread across Russia in 1905.

In the spring 1906 edition of the *Workers' Annual*, she laid out the problems caused by capitalism, and the solution of workers' power.

Crises

"Economic crises are inevitable so long as the present capitalist system exists," she said.

"Crises will end only when the economy is run by society to respond to the needs of all its members."

Some of Kollontai's most powerful work centred around the arguments she had with middle class feminists, who abandoned the interests of working women in their pursuit of equality with men.

At the same time, Kollontai was battling to raise the importance of women's liberation within the Bolshevik Party.

Porter writes, "She was one of only a small number of women activists in the party, fighting on two fronts, against the feminists and her comrades' chauvinism."

These arguments can be seen most clearly in *The Social Basis of the Woman Question*, which



ALEXANDRA KOLLONTAI led the way for women before, during and after the Russian Revolution of 1917

FIGHTER FROM THE STRUGGLE

Writings From The Struggle contains new translations of Alexandra Kollontai's work. Isabel Ringrose looks at a revolutionary committed to liberation and socialism



raised socialist demands for the feminist All-Russian Conference of Women in 1908.

She passionately insists that working women can only win liberation by fighting for socialism alongside their male comrades.

"A united women's organisation reflecting the interests of the two antagonistic classes is a fantasy," Kollontai wrote.

"For the feminists, political equality means equality under the present capitalist system. Working women's struggle for their rights is part of the struggle of their class. The idea that

imposed on human relations within a capitalist system.

"She wrote of 'free love' not as loveless promiscuity, but as an ideal to be aspired to," Porter explains.

Kollontai partly took her inspiration from the young peasant woman newly arrived in the city to work in a factory "who does not hesitate to follow the first call of love, the first heartbeat".

In her 1916 book *Society and Motherhood*, Kollontai developed her ideas that a socialist society must take full responsibility for all women and their children.

BY THE outbreak of the First World War Kollontai had read Lenin's September Theses, which argued workers and soldiers could turn it into a revolutionary movement.

"She had finally found an anti-war programme she could support, committed to internationalism and the class struggle," Porter explains.

Kollontai used her pamphlet *Who Needs the War?* to explain the causes of the war and appeal to soldiers to fight their class enemies at home.

"The evils for which governments have declared war against each other are introduced in their own countries," she wrote.

"Capital clashes with capital, each seeking to destroy the other and establish its monopoly, robbing the workers who produce the goods, and the consumers who purchase them.

"The task now facing the working class of every country is to destroy the capitalist clique that is destroying millions of lives to increase its profits."

Meanwhile in Russia, revolution was coming.

By 10 March 1917, the whole of the capital Petrograd was on strike.

When the revolt forced the ruling Tsar to abdicate, Kollontai said it was "impossible to describe the joy" of hearing the news.

She immediately returned to Russia from exile and defended Lenin's position of appealing to workers and peasants to seize the state through the workers' councils, known as the soviets.

Kollontai was "the only Bolshevik to speak in support of Lenin's first speech to the Petrograd Soviet in April," Porter writes.

Following the July Days—an attack on a mass demonstration by the Provisional Government—Kollontai was jailed for three months.

While still in jail, she was elected to the central committee of the Bolshevik Party. She was the first woman in history to be a member of a governing cabinet.

When the Bolsheviks took control of Russia on 25 October, Kollontai was elected as Commissar of Social Welfare. "We were hungry, we rarely

got a night's sleep. But we all worked passionately, for we were in a hurry to build the new Soviet life," Kollontai wrote in her diaries. She threw herself into making the changes to women's lives that she had spent so long arguing for.

Kollontai set up new can- teens, nurseries, maternity hospitals, orphanages, and homes for war veterans and the elderly.

"Communal living was at the heart of her vision of the new socialist family," Porter explains.

Kollontai drafted the first law of the revolution, which introduced equal pay for women.

She also drafted the Marriage Code, which criminalised domestic violence and gave women access to divorce.

Her time in government was far from harmonious.

She resigned in April 1918, after voting against the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty, which withdrew Russian forces from the First World War.

War

But her resignation didn't last long. As civil war gripped Russia, Kollontai was drawn to the front and "put aside her differences with the party" in order to tour as a speaker defending the revolution.

"We are fighting not to occupy new lands, not to enslave other nations, but to defend ourselves against the capitalists," Kollontai said in Ukraine.

Kollontai's other major work can be found in the *Zhenotdel*, the women's department of government.

From November 1920 she headed the department, which encouraged women's political development and enforced existing legislation for women's equality.

"Women's liberation is fundamental to the entire world socialist revolution," she wrote in *Communist Woman*, the *Zhenotdel*'s official newspaper.

But the new society was struggling to establish itself after the civil war had ripped apart the country.

By 1920, starvation swept the new socialist society, and Russia was politically isolated and surrounded by hostile imperialist states.

Arguments raged in the government about the best way forward.

Kollontai was a key figure in the Workers' Opposition faction within the government. This argued that trade union



Kollontai meeting ordinary people during the first Soviet government, 1917-1918 (top). Angry protests and strikes by women workers were instrumental in setting off the revolution (above)

and factory committees should run the economy, not the central state. But the future of the socialist society was hanging on a knife edge.

If the central government had relinquished control, it would leave the burgeoning new world extremely vulnerable to the counter-revolution. Following her involvement in the Workers' Opposition, Kollontai was removed from the *Zhenotdel* and censured within the Bolsheviks.

The degeneration of socialist Russia into the Stalinist state was mirrored in Kollontai's own life. From 1922, Kollontai was drawn into political exile and was an overseas ambassador for the brutal Stalinist regime, until she died in 1952.

But her writings, many accessible for the first time in Porter's new book, contain vital teachings for revolutionaries today.

She understood the power of the working class, pushed for working women to lead in struggle and fought for the socialist world that revolution could create.

READ MORE

Writings From The Struggle

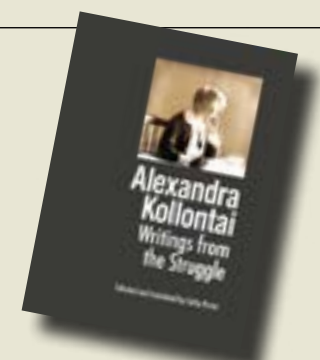
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A Rebel's Guide to Alexandra Kollontai

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The social media bosses are not on our side

With Donald Trump banned from social media **Sarah Bates** asks what are the implications of such measures for the left

WHEN outgoing US president Donald Trump had his social media accounts closed down two weeks ago there was celebration.

First Facebook banned him from its platform following the chaotic scenes when his supporters occupied the US Capitol building on 6 January.

The next day, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg said Trump had been locked out of the platform "indefinitely and for at least the next two weeks until the peaceful transition of power is complete".

He said Trump had used Facebook and Instagram "to incite violent insurrection against a democratically elected government".

Within days, Trump's posting privileges on sites owned by media giants such as YouTube, Amazon and Apple fell like dominoes.

Wild

Trump tweeted that the "Save America" protest would "stop the steal" of the election. "Big protest in DC on January 6th," he said. "Be there, will be wild!"

While it's understandable to feel cheered that Trump is being denied a platform, it does throw up questions about the precedent it sets.

Online platforms are now huge players in the publication of news and how people exchange information.

But the current situation is a far cry from the hopes of activists that the internet would wrestle information dissemination from the control of bosses.

So now users can be banned for breaching Facebook's vague "community guidelines" or, as in the case of Trump, inciting violence.

A tiny group of people sit in Silicon Valley boardrooms and decide whether this violence is legitimate or illegitimate. These same



SHOULD MARK Zuckerberg decide who is on social media?

people head up huge private corporations that can set out appeal processes that amplify or cut off voices.

The whole history of workers' struggles and battles for liberation have included violent clashes and calls for resistance.

And for activists organising resistance today, the implications of social media bans have to be carefully considered.

For instance, if a mass picket is attacked by cops or anti-fascist protesters are attacked by Nazis, it's possible strikers and anti-racists could be banned from social media.

It's entirely possible to believe that social media sites could block Black Lives Matter activists after the angry protests of last summer. And social media is also a powerful tool in the hands of the state.

In the US, the FBI has released pictures of people storming the Capitol and has been scrounging for tips on how to arrest them.

People have scrambled to identify the leaders of

the protests so the FBI can prosecute them.

And it looks like it is working—the bureau said it had received "more than 100,000 pieces of digital media" since 6 January.

The FBI may have used its power against right wing protesters this time.

But these sort of police tactics are generally used against the left.

The British state has used Facebook posts as a way to target Muslims and throw them in jail.

Two men who in 2011 posted messages on Facebook calling for riots were sentenced to four years in prison.

And now drill rap videos are being used to prosecute young black men for inciting gang rivalries.

Evidence

The videos are being used as evidence to link defendants together under the "joint enterprise" laws. These laws mean people can be collectively responsible for crimes even if they weren't directly involved.

Some on the left are overjoyed that Trump has been pushed to the fringe of online platforms—although he still has a hearing in traditional broadcast media.

But it's wrong to use it as an example of how media CEOs will be on our side.

Trump's calls for violence aren't the only threat facing us—alongside them lies how our media is controlled, by who and for what purpose.

“Trump's calls for violence aren't the only threat facing us

Report on deaths of 9,000 Irish children is cover-up

by SIMON BASKETTER

AN IRISH investigation reported last week on how over 9,000 children died at 18 institutions for “unmarried mothers” and their babies between 1922 and 1998.

Most of the children died from starvation and malnourishment.

Survivors’ harrowing experiences were recounted—and then ignored in the report.

The inquiry was sparked after the existence of a mass grave was revealed at the site of a former home—run by nuns—in Tuam in the west of Ireland.

Some 796 children had died at the home and were interred in a former sewage tank.

There were around 56,000 “unmarried mothers” and 57,000 children in the mother and baby homes investigated.

The Irish constitution in 1937 enshrined the special role of the Catholic Church in the Irish state.

The Church was rewarded for playing the role of the ideological cop in Irish

society by an accumulation of institutional power.

It got control of the hospitals and schools.

Ireland built up a brutal architecture of containment institutions.

For decades women who were considered morally deviant formed a disappeared and abused population.

Imprisoned in “Magdalene laundries” to carry out unpaid labour for the crime of pregnancy out of wedlock, they then gave birth in mother and baby homes.

If the child survived it could be put up for adoption regardless of the mother’s wishes. Thousands of babies were sold and then exported

to the US and Australia. The darker skinned babies were always rejected for adoption.

If not adopted, the child would go to an industrial school—bizarrely and offensively often referred to as orphanages.

Previous inquiries have shown these to be places of brutal physical and sexual

abuse by the religious orders.

Children in industrial schools were used as slave labour in farms, laundries and even a rosary bead factory.

This cosy cartel between Church and state provided not just an ideological role.

It saved the state from providing even limited social welfare, and the church got influence along with large amounts of hard cash.

The state paid the Church to run the system of abuse.

Blame

However, the report does not lay the blame at the door of the Church or the state.

It points the finger at families and fathers it said turned their backs on the unmarried, pregnant women.

It claimed, “Responsibility for that harsh treatment rests mainly with the fathers of their children and their own immediate families.”

Outside of the grubby cover-up is an attempt to prevent the survivors from getting compensation.

But the whitewash is undermined by the testimony given to the commission. In Bessborough in Cork,

75 percent of the children born or admitted in 1943 died.

A total of 9,768 women and 8,938 children passed through the hands of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

One young mother described how she was stripped of her name, belongings and savings when she became an inmate.

She said, “It would have been impossible to leave, all of our things had been confiscated, we had no clothes and no money.”

“From time to time we were allowed outside, but were always escorted by nuns.”

Rose McKinney, an 82 year old mother, said the father of her daughter came to visit her, but the nuns did not allow him to see her or their child.

When the nuns sent Rose on to the Magdalene Laundry, they wrote under reason, “Penitent—twice”. Her two children, who they took from her, were defined as crimes.

Rose said, “I just want justice.”

Watch Irish socialist Brid Smith’s video response at bit.ly/BridS1301

NAMES OF children who died in Tuam placed at the Garden of Remembrance, Dublin

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Israeli group labels regime ‘apartheid’ in a new report

An authoritative report calling the occupation of Palestine ‘apartheid’ is an important statement from an Israeli organisation, explains Nick Clark

ISRAEL runs an apartheid regime. That's no longer simply the charge of Palestine solidarity campaigners—but the position of Israel's largest and most respected human rights organisation.

In a paper published last week, the organisation B'Tselem said Israel's rule, both in the state of Israel and Palestinian territories, is “designed to cement the supremacy of one group—Jews—over another—Palestinians”.

“This is apartheid,” it declared. That's a striking position for an Israeli organisation to take.

It's also an important shift for B'Tselem. It was originally founded by Israeli politicians and academics to monitor Israel's military occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

In Britain supporters of Israel are campaigning to make it harder to brand it an apartheid state. In Israel B'Tselem says there's no escaping the facts.

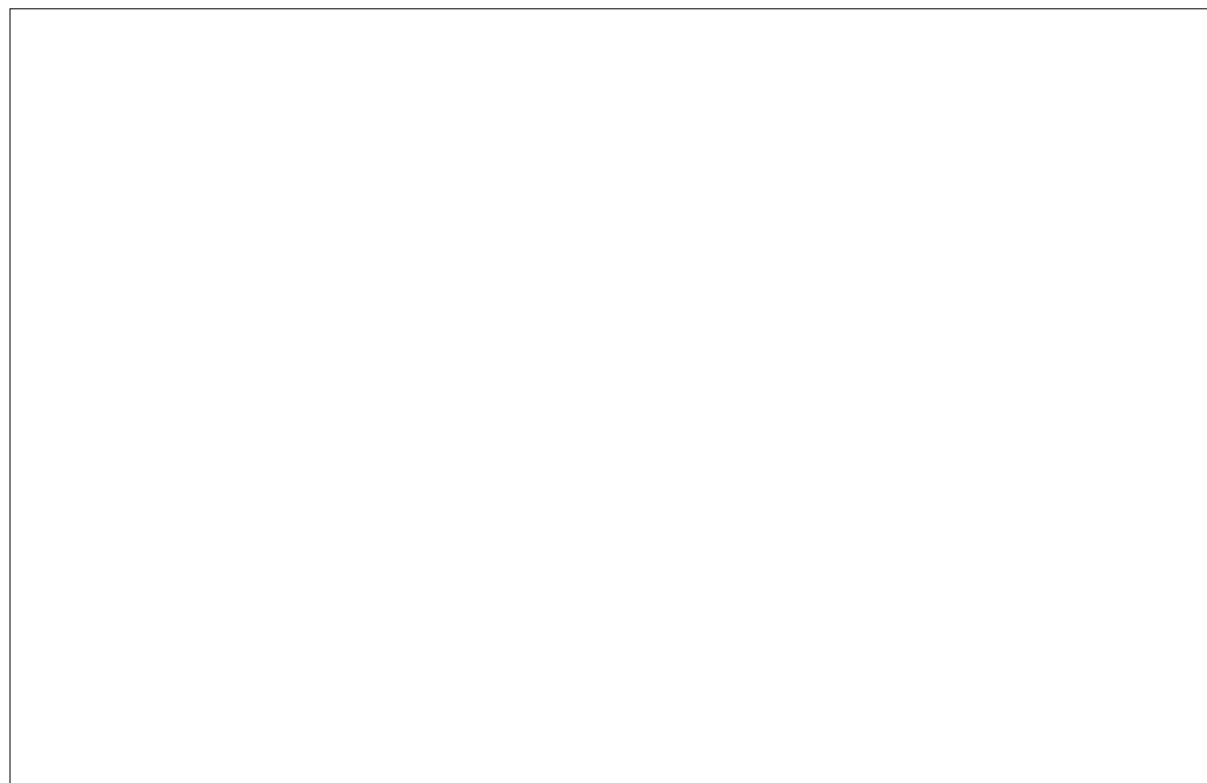
It's no good pretending that Israel and the Palestinian territories it occupies are separate political systems. Carrying on that fiction is just one way that Israeli governments have tried to deny that they run an apartheid regime.

B'Tselem said the reality of the occupation means the apartheid label applies to the whole area “from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea”.

That isn't to say that the reality of Palestinian oppression is the same everywhere.

“The Israeli regime has divided the area into several units that it defines and governs differently, according to Palestinians different rights in each,” B'Tselem explained.

Inside Israel's “recognised” borders, Palestinians are labelled Arab-Isrealis—though they don't have the



PALESTINIAN LIVES are reduced to second class status

same rights as Jewish citizens. In East Jerusalem, they are “permanent residents”—but not citizens—of Israel, and this status can be revoked.

Enclave

In the West Bank, more than 2.6 million Palestinians live “in disconnected enclaves, under rigid military rule and without political rights”. And though Israel withdrew its forces from the Gaza Strip in 2005, the following siege means it “has continued to control nearly every aspect of life”. Palestinians cannot even travel

freely between any of these areas, but “Jewish citizens live as though the entire area were a single space (excluding the Gaza Strip)”.

The borders that control Palestinians' lives don't exist for Israeli citizens.

B'Tselem said that, as the occupation has gone on, the apartheid system has become “more institutionalized and explicit”.

That's why it's made the shift to branding the whole area an apartheid regime, pointing to the recent Nation State Law as a turning point.

This explicitly gives Jewish citizens more rights. B'Tselem doesn't explain when or why apartheid began, or what the solution is.

“There are various political paths to a just solution,” it said. So it doesn't rule out that Jews and Arabs could live in one state as equals—another bold position for an Israeli organisation.

“But all of us must first choose to say no to apartheid,” it said. And its paper is a useful tool for anyone who wants to do that.

Read the paper at bit.ly/Apartheid0121

Citizenship and land rights are not extended to Palestinians

AT THE heart of Israel's apartheid regime is a system that denies Palestinians the right to live on their own land.

B'Tselem pointed out, “Any Jew in the world and his or her children, grandchildren and spouses are entitled to immigrate to Israel at any time and receive Israeli citizenship, with all of its associated rights.”

“They receive this status even if they choose to live in a West Bank settlement.”

But Palestinians born in other countries don't have that right “even if they, their parents or their grandparents were born and lived there”.

Even Palestinians living in the



West Bank, East Jerusalem or the Gaza Strip “cannot obtain Israeli citizenship and relocate to Israeli sovereign territory”.

Palestinian refugees can never

return to the land that they and their families were expelled from when Israel was founded in 1948.

They will always be denied justice while Israel's apartheid state exists.

Israel also uses its racist laws to grab more land.

Its Nation State law says Israel will “encourage and promote” settlements on occupied Palestinian land.

Meanwhile Israel “severely restricts” Palestinian building and development.

“The result is small, crowded enclaves where residents have no choice but to build without permits,” said B'Tselem.

Laws revoke Palestinians residency rights—and confiscate their homes—if they have lived away for more than three years.

“Since 1967, Israel has revoked the status of some 250,000 Palestinians in the West Bank (East Jerusalem included) and the Gaza Strip.”

Even inside Israel's “official” borders it has used “absentee laws” to take over land left by Palestinians expelled after 1948.

And, “Israel has significantly reduced the areas designated for Palestinian local councils and communities, which now have access to less than 3 percent of the country's total area.”

Separation of Israel's citizens

EVEN inside Israel's “recognised” borders, Palestinian “citizens” are effectively barred from living in certain areas. Neighbourhood admission committees can turn Palestinians away on the grounds of “cultural incompatibility”.

“Officially, any Israeli citizen can live in any of the country's cities. In practice, only 10 percent of Palestinian citizens do.

“Even then, they are usually relegated to separate neighbourhoods.”

No freedom of movement

FOR Palestinians, moving from one part of the apartheid regime to another is difficult.

“Palestinians from the West Bank who wish to enter Israel, East Jerusalem or the Gaza Strip must apply to the Israeli authorities,” explained B'Tselem.

“Palestinians who wish to leave Gaza or Palestinians from other units who wish to enter it must also submit a special application for a permit to the Israeli authorities. Israel treats every permit issued to a Palestinian as an act of grace rather than the fulfilment of a right.”

Many political restrictions

PALESTINIANS in East Jerusalem can vote in local elections but not for parliament.

In the West Bank, the Palestinian Authority—which supposedly governs—does not control its borders nor “planning and land policies, water, communication infrastructure, import and export, and military control over land, sea and air space”.

Palestinians are also “not allowed to demonstrate” and “almost any political statement is considered incitement”.

“These restrictions are assiduously enforced by the military courts.”

SCOTTISH LABOUR

Resignation adds to the party's crisis

RICHARD LEONARD last week resigned as leader of Scottish Labour.

He rose to the party's leadership as a left wing candidate who would support and pursue radical demands put forward by Jeremy Corbyn.

Under his watch there was a shift to supporting some more left wing policies.

But these were very limited. It was not enough to see a surge in working class support.

During his three years as leader, Leonard championed opposition to a second independence referendum.

He kept Scottish Labour firmly aligned with defence of the British state.

This failure to change Labour's position on independence continued to cut the party off from most working class people and its former supporters in Scotland.

During the Corbyn years, Labour in Scotland did not witness the rapid growth in membership seen in the rest of Britain.

This opened Leonard to attacks from the right, who from the beginning set out to sabotage his leadership. Those who longed for the party to return to the days of Tony Blair publicly undermined him.

Leonard's departure signals Scottish Labour's realignment with Keir Starmer and his project of rapidly shifting the party to the right.

The candidates to replace Leonard include Anas Sarwar, a millionaire whose family firm in the past has been reported to not pay staff the living wage.

The left are backing Monica Lennon, the MSP for Central Scotland.

Labour's long decline in support in Scotland plumbed depths with Tony Blair's embrace of neoliberalism and warmongering. But it accelerated after the 2014 independence referendum, when Labour joined the Tories in a desperate effort to salvage the union.

Faced with a pandemic that has killed over 5,000 people in Scotland and decimated jobs, working class people in Scotland deserve better.

It won't come from an Scottish National Party that has overseen this disaster. But neither will it come from a Labour Party that refuses to back demands for independence or challenge the status quo.

Those remaining left wing activists in Labour should break from the party and instead embrace the struggle outside.

Hector Sierra

'We're going to win,' say Sage care home strikers

by SOPHIE SQUIRE

A GROUP of mainly migrant workers at a north London care home are fighting for higher pay.

UVW union members at the Sage care home in north London struck last Friday to demand £12 an hour and the same terms and conditions as NHS workers.

The union held an online rally the night before the walkout with strikers and local activists.

Noemi, a laundry worker at Sage, told the rally that workers decided to strike "because management doesn't listen to them".

Care worker Julia said, "We are looking after vulnerable people—people that have lots of needs. But I don't think we are valued."

Noemi and Julia both told the rally that the work at Sage often feels dehumanising.

"They make you feel like you are not a person," said Julia.

"You work for very little money, but it's almost like you are made to feel like you should be thankful."

Risking

Noemi pointed out that workers have been "risking their lives" in the pandemic.

A UVW organiser said that, at one point, workers were forced to make PPE protective kit with whatever they could find.

One worker spoke about how she was placed on night shifts for three days in a row—despite telling management she was pregnant.

Sage worker Bella described how

workers first began to organise.

She said that when she started working at the care home she was "surprised by what happened there. I was always complaining and always fighting," she said.

"I was angry, but I was also on my own. Then I began to speak with my colleagues. And we started talking and wondering what we could do."

Bella added that she then persuaded a number of her colleagues to join the UVW union.

"I always said we need to go on strike," she said. "I was fed up with many things. I said we need to put a stop to this."

Over 130 supporters of the strike took part in a virtual picket line on Friday morning. And despite concerns about new legislation that means pickets can be hit by coronavirus restrictions, workers defiantly took to a real picket on Sunday. In a live video of the picket workers chanted, "We will win."

Biles, another worker at Sage said, "Today is our day—we won't stop until we get better sick pay and the recognition of our union."

And Bella added, "Our name is going to stay in the minds of the bosses at Sage, because we are going to win."

Donate to the strike fund at bit.ly/sagecarehomefund

University of East London cleaners fight victimisation

OUTSOURCED WORKERS at the University of East London (UEL) are fighting victimisation after daring to fight back.

The Caiwu union is mounting an appeal against the dismissal of cleaner and union rep, Carlos.

Workers are fighting for better conditions and for the university to end outsourcing and instead bring their contracts back in house.

They held a number of vibrant protests last year to take outsourcer Nviro to task. "Nviro's contract with UEL ends this year," Carlos told Socialist Worker.

"It is a good time to continue the campaign to bring workers in house. Security was brought in house—so cleaners can be as well."

Carlos said "Nviro really started their full victimisation" when "my colleagues voted for me to represent them in 2019".

"It was when we started to fight back and have protests that the company began to really look at me," he said.

"They told my supervisor to watch me more closely, and management told them that I was the one who called in Caiwu to 'cause trouble'."

When Carlos was accused of being late for work a number of times, he took a picture of his clocking-in slip to prove he'd come in on time.

Management then accused Carlos of being in breach of data protection laws because he took a picture on his phone.

Cleaners have played a vital role during coronavirus, but Carlos said that they are still treated appallingly.

"What we do is very dangerous now with the pandemic," he said. "And we have done it mostly without protection, with no masks provided."

"I'm 58, I'm asthmatic and have diabetes and high blood pressure."

"I said I could come into work. But that we need more protection." Tweet solidarity to [@caiwuunion](https://twitter.com/caiwuunion)

Cleaners protest at University of East London last year

HEALTH WORKERS

Turn anger over pay into effective action

IT'S URGENT that the health unions step up campaigning to win a pay rise for all NHS workers.

The 14 health unions responded this week to the NHS pay review body's call for evidence. They set out the need for an early and significant pay rise for staff.

Unison head of health Sara Gorton said, "Time and again ministers remind the public about protecting the NHS. The government can show how to do just that by investing properly in the staff looking after us all."

"Many are beyond exhausted and feel let down by politicians who expect health workers to give everything but show them little in return."



WORKERS PROTESTED over pay last year

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Forward

Health workers should be due a pay rise in April, but unions want this brought forward.

But the NHS pay review body is not due to report until May. Devolved governments in Scotland and Wales will say they are reliant on funding decisions based on this process.

This means that NHS staff

across Britain are not likely to get a pay rise until June at the earliest.

Royal College of Nursing general secretary Donna Kinnair said, "NHS staff are worse off now than ten years ago."

When tens of thousands of nursing jobs are vacant, the government cannot afford to let more leave over low pay."

Unison released a poll this week showing a majority of the public think the government should bring forward a wage increase for all NHS staff. The survey also reveals that health workers feel deeply dissatisfied with their treatment, with only one in ten saying the government values NHS staff.

Some 85 percent say they

are angry at how NHS staff are being treated.

But the Tories won't give in without intense pressure.

The mood of bitter anger among NHS workers—and the wider support from other workers—needs quickly to be turned into protests and the sort of workplace resistance that's been seen in France (see page 8).

ENGINEERING

Rolls-Royce shows strikes are the best way to fight back

A DEAL has been agreed at the Rolls-Royce plant in Barnoldswick, Lancashire, that has saved jobs.

It follows nine weeks of strikes. Unite union members had been fighting a threat to 350 jobs and the possible closure of the site.

The deal, which Unite has called "ground-breaking", includes a minimum headcount of 350 workers, and a two-year no compulsory redundancy agreement.

Failed

Sustained strikes have secured much more than failed propaganda campaigns such as at Ford Bridgend in South Wales and Honda in Swindon.

Ross Quinn, Unite regional officer, said that faced with the threat to jobs, workers "united, taking to the picket line in all weathers to fight back against closure, and won".

Strikes are always a powerful response to attacks

from bosses and show the strength workers have.

But it is still possible that Rolls-Royce bosses may push through rounds of voluntary redundancies.

Steve Turner, assistant general secretary of Unite, said the deal "proves that unions, working with employers and communities, can achieve the green industrial future that Unite has demanded".

He added, "I'd like to recognise the role of Rolls-Royce CEO, Warren East, who was prepared to listen to a clear alternative business case for this highly skilled, dedicated workforce."

It's not bosses who have saved jobs, it was the resistance to them.

Workers at Barnoldswick will be relieved at what their courageous struggle has achieved.

But there will need to be renewed organisation, and constant vigilance, to oppose any move to cut jobs or attack pay and conditions.

AIRBUS

Pay cuts don't save jobs

UNITE UNION members employed at the Airbus plant in Broughton, north Wales, have been asked to vote on accepting pay cuts to "save jobs".

The plan which has been negotiated between Unite and Airbus will see a reduction in the working week of 5 percent to 10 percent.

In response the bosses say they will lift the possibility of compulsory redundancies.

But there might be voluntary redundancies.

Peter Hughes, Unite Wales regional secretary, said, "We have already lost close to 1,000 high quality jobs at Broughton during the

coronavirus crisis, we can't afford to lose any more. This plan to reduce hours will come with a reduction in pay for our members but Unite and our senior reps on site believe this is the best option available."

The company says it will make up a third of the pay reduction that will flow from the cut in hours.

However, the experience across the industry shows that accepting a trade off between pay and jobs simply encourages further management blackmail at a later stage.

And there's a question over why 1,000 jobs have already gone at Broughton without serious resistance.

UNIVERSITIES

National action to stop unsafe university return

THE UCU union has said it could strike if universities are fully reopened this academic year. It said teaching should remain online to stop the spread of coronavirus.

The union said it will "support branches that ballot members for action against an unsafe return to in-person teaching".

Easter

UCU general secretary Jo Grady said, "Death rates are higher than ever. Even an Easter return now looks hopelessly optimistic."

"If the government and universities will not commit to prioritising staff safety then the UCU will continue to resist a return to unsafe campuses."

Already several UCU branches have voted to strike over unsafe

conditions, including at Northumbria and Birmingham City universities. Other branches are balloting.

It's good that the union is saying it will support fights to keep workers safe.

But virus safety is a national issue, and it would be much stronger to have a coordinated, national fight.

The UCU Left group has called for mass meetings of members and for every branch to organise ballots.

It said, "To protect the lives of our staff and students and communities we must act collectively and if that takes industrial action then so be it."

And it said the UCU should make clear that workers can use Section 44 of the 1996 Employment Rights Act to immediately stop unsafe working.

SCHOOLS

Battle over school jobs

STRIKES ARE on the cards at two east London primary schools over job cuts.

The Unite union has ten members at the Colvestone primary school and the Thomas Fairchild community school.

They have voted unanimously for strikes over restructuring plans which include changes to terms and conditions, and redundancies.

The schools are part of the Hackney-based Soaring Skies Federation.

Unite says there are potentially more than 18 jobs at risk out of about 30 teaching support staff.

Unite regional officer Onay Kasab said, "The employer now needs to withdraw the proposals to cut jobs immediately, otherwise we will be issuing notice of strike days very shortly."

Unite is liaising with the other unions concerned about the plans—the GMB, NEU and Unison.

PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT

Meeting to plan resistance

THE PEOPLE Before Profit group is holding a national activist meeting this Sunday at 2pm on the theme, Fighting for safety, jobs and survival.

It will be a participatory meeting held on Zoom with workshops and plenaries.

Speakers include rank and file activists and union representatives plus Labour MPs John McDonnell, Diane Abbott and Bell Ribeiro-Addy.

People Before Profit says, "The government has stubbornly refused to improve economic support for those impacted worst in the pandemic." It adds that resistance is what forces the Tories to back off.

Workshops include sessions on fighting redundancies, resisting austerity, opposing scapegoating and campaigning for welfare and housing.

Join the meeting on Sunday 24 January, 2pm. For full details of speakers and to register go to bit.ly/PbP0121

TRANSPORT

Fight for safety on railways

THE RMT union has pledged to fight for safe working practices during the intensified pandemic.

It is in response to new proposals from the Rail Industry Coronavirus Forum (RICF).

The union is concerned that the new proposals aren't effective and will place lives on the line.

The RMT says workers are at greater risk now because new Covid-19 strains are more transmissible.

And rail and tube usage is much higher now than during the first lockdown in March last year.

The union says rail workers could face the same fate as bus workers last year.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said, "The union believes that there is a dangerous 'business as usual' attitude emerging from employers."

"We do not see evidence of measures being put in place to adequately protect our members, and rigorous enforcement of such measures, in view of the changed and more dangerous phase of this pandemic."

The best response is workers' action, as in the schools.

BEWARE BIDEN'S EMPTY PROMISES

by SOPHIE SQUIRE

JOE BIDEN was set to become US president on Wednesday this week, but don't think that means justice for black people or an end to attacks on workers.

The inauguration will see gushing tributes to Biden for setting the US on a path back to "business as usual" after four dark years of Donald Trump.

For the bosses that means defending their interests and creating stability for profit-making.

United Airlines, Amazon and Uber were among the multinationals that have contributed towards the costs of Biden's ceremony and celebrations this week.

At least at the level of rhetoric, Biden will have to sound different to Trump.

Sweeping

He takes office with Covid-19 sweeping through the country. The US death toll has hit 400,000.

Biden is set to sign a number of executive orders on his arrival in the White House.

He plans to re-enter negotiations with Iran, return to the Paris climate agreements and to overturn Trump's travel ban on people from Muslim majority countries.

But the substance will be much thinner than the claims. Biden won't demand that schools close or that non-essential workplaces shut to contain the virus.

And he won't defend people's living standards.

Biden has unveiled a £1.4 trillion coronavirus relief package. And he can pass whatever legislation he wants now that the Democrats control the presidency, the House of Representatives and the Senate.

But the obstacle to even limited change is how far the bosses are prepared to go.

Previously Biden had promised a £1,475 stimulus cheque to workers who have been hit by the virus. But now that figure has been lowered to £1,033. The other £442 was what has already been paid out last month.

This purported £1,475 cheque was instrumental in winning two major Senate seats in Georgia at the start of the month. Biden has also promised to dial back on some of the Trump administration's immigration policies.

But already it seems that the incoming president will continue to take a hard line on those who try to enter the US.

In an interview with NBC news a Biden administration official said that migrants

"need to understand they're not going to be able to come into the United States immediately".

Instead of Trump's standalone "America First" approach, Biden is for rebuilding ties with the Nato nuclear alliance and traditional allies.

The aim is to reassemble a broader force to repulse rivals globally, and China in particular.

A Biden presidency means austerity, lack of real action over climate chaos and backing for war.

Unless there is opposition, he can strengthen the conditions for a continuing racist right, with or without Trump.

The movements that fought against Trump need to be mobilised more powerfully. There must be no honeymoon for Biden.

More online
For more stories go to
www.socialistworker.co.uk

Far right thugs consider their next move ahead of presidential ceremony

AS DONALD Trump leaves office, the far right remains a threat.

And Joe Biden's administration won't push it back.

The Democrat leadership won't even criticise the Republicans who tried to overturn Biden's election.

Speaking to CNN news, Biden's chief of staff Ron Klain said that Republican Senators such as Josh Hawley and Ted Cruz would be welcome at the inauguration.

The FBI had warned that armed Trump supporters would protest in all of the 50 state capitals in the days before Biden's inauguration.

Much of Washington DC has been locked down. The National Mall, which is usually thronged with thousands of people for inaugurations, was shut at the request of the secret service.

Last Sunday there were small far right protests in states including Texas, Oregon, Michigan and

Ohio. In Ohio and Oregon there were anti-fascist counter-protests.

And the leader of the fascist Proud Boys, Enrique Tarrio, told the USA Today newspaper that his group wouldn't be mobilising and that he felt like "this part of the battle is over".

Even if there aren't major protests this week, far right activists are preparing for their next moves.

And they have allies in the US state.

So far 33 current police officers from 17 states have been identified as participating in the pro-Trump rally that launched the invasion of the Capitol.

And in Washington DC police arrested people on weapons charges after they tried to enter the inauguration security zone this week.

Fighting the far right can't be left to Biden or the state.

It requires mass movements from below.